

Catawba County Schools Snuff Out Tobacco

As teachers and students pack their backpacks in preparation for the new 2004 - 2005 school year, there's one product that will no longer be welcome anywhere on any Catawba County Schools' campus - tobacco. According to the new 100% tobacco free policy, which was officially adopted by the School Board in May, *"No student, staff or school visitor (including contracted workers) will be permitted to smoke, dip, or chew tobacco at any time, including non-school hours, in any building, facility or vehicle owned, leased, rented or contracted by the school district; on school grounds, athletic grounds, or parking lots; or at any school-sponsored events off campus."* A survey, which was conducted in November 2003 at each of the five high schools in the Catawba County Schools district, found that 80% of students were in favor of the 100% tobacco free policy.

This will certainly mean big changes for Catawba County Schools, which previously allowed adults to use tobacco in designated areas on campus. Catawba County Schools adoption of this new policy is part of a trend that has been sweeping the state over the last year. Currently, 39 out of the 117 school districts in North Carolina are 100% tobacco free, which represents a 225% increase since 2002, when only 13 schools had adopted the policy. The benefits of this type of policy, which has also been adopted by Hickory City Schools, include, but are not limited to the following:

- Protects children from a dangerous drug because tobacco use isn't just a "bad habit", it is a powerful addiction;
- Provides positive role modeling for adult employees and visitors;
- Reduces children's observation of tobacco use and takes a firm stand against it;
- Supports, rather than contradicts, prevention messages delivered in classrooms by sending clear, consistent non-use messages; and
- Provides a safe environment for students by reducing exposure to second-hand smoke.

Research has shown that by adopting 100% tobacco free policies for their campuses, school districts can reduce teenage smoking by as much as 20 to 40 percent. Totally Teens' hope is that teens will use this new policy as a motivator to help them achieve their goal of cessation. Tobacco use is the most preventable cause of death in the United States, and yet 3,000 teens are still choosing to light up their first cigarette each day. If you're tired of blowing all of your hard-earned money on tobacco, tired of having smelly clothes and hair, tired of being sick all the time, and tired of having your loved ones constantly nagging you about your smoking, then contact Candice Justice at (828)695-5862 or cjustice@catawbacountync.gov and let us help you kick the habit.

AM I IN A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP?

With the summer in full bloom, chances are that you have found a relationship blossoming as well. The question is **Do you know whether your relationship is healthy or abusive?**

A healthy relationship is one with trust, respect, honesty, equality and good communication. It's a relationship where two people respect each other's likes, dislikes, their families, friends and boundaries. Most importantly, a healthy relationship makes us feel good about who we are.

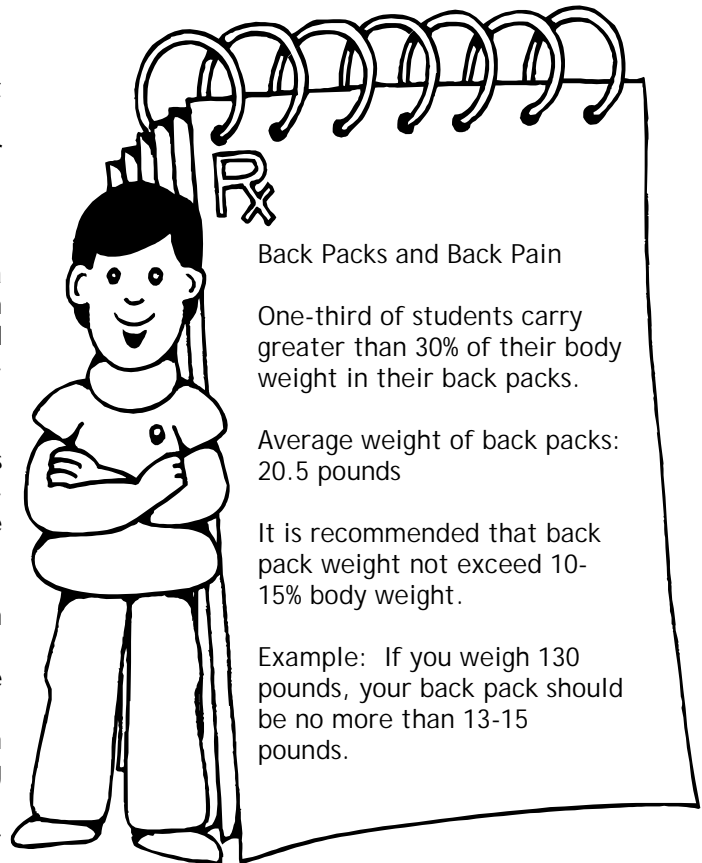
An unhealthy relationship is one that involves mean, disrespectful, controlling and abusive behaviors. Some **warning signs that you might be in an unhealthy relationship include:**

- Does your boyfriend get angry when you refuse to drop everything for him?
- Does your girlfriend make fun of the way you dress or of your hobbies?
- Does your boyfriend keep you from seeing your friends, family or talking to other guys?
- Have you ever been hit by your boyfriend or girlfriend?
- Have you ever been forced to do something sexually that you did not want to do?

These are just a few of the warning signs to keep in mind. Anytime you are in a relationship and feel uncomfortable or mistreated, talk to a friend or a trusted adult and get help.

DAILY DIARY

You have all probably been told to drink your milk because it's good for you. But most teenagers don't get the recommended 3-4 servings of milk, cheese, or yogurt daily. Dairy products (milk, cheese, and yogurt) are actually very important for growing, developing teens. They contain lots of calcium and Vitamin D that are necessary for growing bones and teeth. Without Calcium and Vitamin D, your bones and teeth will be weak and break easily. Dairy products also contain protein for developing muscles. It has also been shown that Calcium and Vitamin D may play an important role in weight loss. Some recent studies have shown that individuals who consumed at least three servings of dairy products a day along with a reasonable diet and exercise lost 22% more weight and 61% more body fat than those who did not consume the three daily servings of dairy. So next time you need a pick - up, reach for a glass of milk, a cup of yogurt, or a slice of cheese.



Back Packs and Back Pain

One-third of students carry greater than 30% of their body weight in their back packs.

Average weight of back packs: 20.5 pounds

It is recommended that back pack weight not exceed 10-15% body weight.

Example: If you weigh 130 pounds, your back pack should be no more than 13-15 pounds.

GET TO THE POINT

Body piercing is becoming more common among teens and young adults. Before you pierce you should know the health risks. They include:

- Pain
- Bleeding
- Longer than expected healing time
- Bacterial infections
- Transmission of HIV or Hepatitis C
- Cyst formation
- Permanent deformity
- Allergic reaction

If you decide to pierce these are some safety guidelines to keep in mind.

- Talk with your doctor
- Check prospective piercing studios thoroughly
 - Do they sterilize everything?
 - Do they wear gloves?
 - Do they dispose of needles

After you have a piercing done, care should include:

- Keep the wound clean as instructed by your piercer.
- Don't wear tight fitting clothes over piercing.
- Watch for signs of infection (redness, increased warmth, pain, swelling).